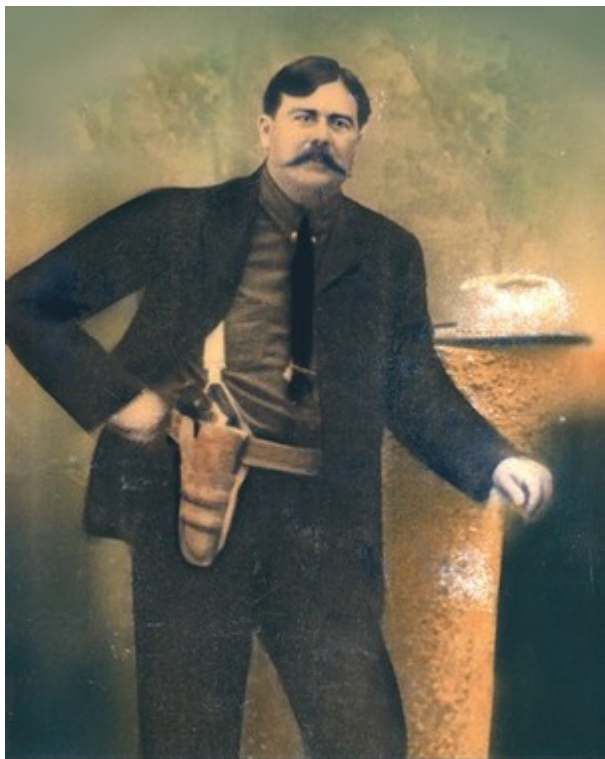




THE WILD WEST

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RANCHO GUEJITO

On September 20, 1845, Jose Maria Orozco, a customs agent, boarded his horse-drawn wagon and headed north from Old Town San Diego to what is now Valley Center to claim a piece of land covering three square leagues, approximately 13,298 acres.

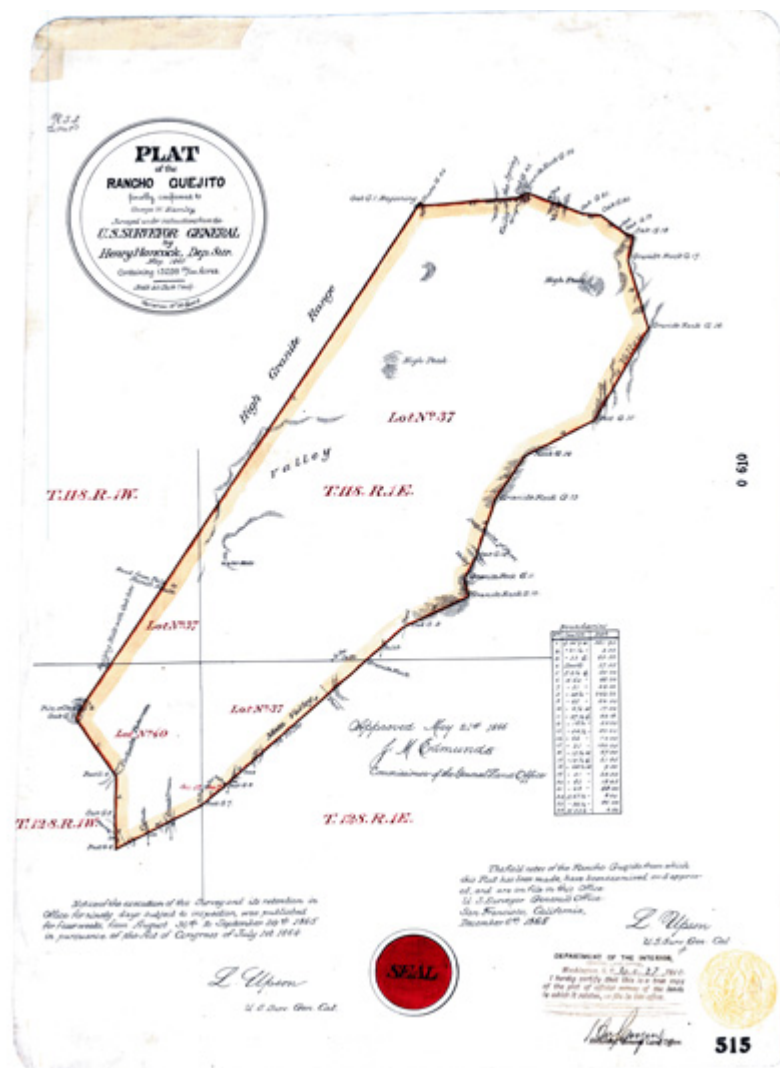


JOSE MARIA OROZCO

In 1845, California was not a part of the United States. It was still a distant province of Mexico. The property was a land grant to Orozco from Pio Pico, the Mexican Provincial Governor.

Pio Pico had handed out similar vast parcels to other friends and patrons. It was one of 800 so-called Mexican Land Grant ranches awarded during a romantic period of history known as the “Days of the Dons”. Orozco named the place Rancho Guejito.

Below: The original 1845 land grant from Mex. Gov. Pio Pico.



Untouched by time, the property has been described as a ranch “that cattlemen see only in their dreams” and a place “where the old west is alive and well.” A rancher who ran cattle on the site for decades declared, “This is where the asphalt ends and the Old West begins.” The ranch has grown over the years from its original historic size of 13,298 acres to approximately 23,000 (36 square miles). The largest single addition came in 1940 when the adjoining Maxcy Vineyard Ranch at 4,500 acres was annexed to Guejito. The most recent acquisition was the purchase of the equally historic 100-acre Rockwood Ranch in 2006, which is now the location for Rancho Guejito Vineyard's Tasting room.

Now in addition to the vineyards, the ranch is home to almost 2,000 grass-fed cattle and many hundreds of acres of citrus, avocados, and vineyards. Our goal is to continue to Ranch and Farm the land as it has been for almost 175 years.

THE ORIGINAL MAXCY WINERY

The Maxcy Winery and homestead was built on the ranch in 1850 by Col. A.E. Maxcy and is said to be the oldest winery in this part of California. By 1852, he planted 1,500 acres in Muscat and Mission grapes, yielding 8-10 tons per acre. By the turn of the century, Maxcy was known as the leading producer of wine in Southern California.

Picture: The Maxcy Winery in 1937.

Today, what remains of the Maxcy winery still stands on the property. Fire and the elements over the years have caused it to fall into further disrepair. Still, we admire the history and Maxcy's legacy of fine wine production in Southern California and hope to one day restore the building.

In cooler months, our Founder's Club members have an opportunity to experience a special tasting at the winery's location.

'Remarkable' pictographs cover boulder in remote Rancho Guejito



"Remarkable" Native American pictographs have been found at Rancho Guejito.



By **J. Harry Jones**

DECEMBER 22, 2016, 5:00 PM

A “remarkable” pictograph site that could date back to the 1700s is hidden along the side of a large boulder in one of the most secluded places in San Diego County, Native American art experts say.

Dozens of drawings cover the 26-foot-wide rock in the heart of a massive former land grant called Rancho Guejito in northeastern San Diego County. One drawing appears to be a conquistador raising a sword and wearing an armored chest plate. Beneath him, perhaps protected by a group of eagle feathers, is a stick figure that could represent a Native American that has been slain or is being threatened.

“It’s an incredibly unusual design,” said Steve Freers, a Native American art expert and author of two books, who — along with former San Diego Museum of Man Curator Ken Hedges — was hired earlier this year by Rancho Guejito’s owners to examine the pictographs.

The ranch is the last undeveloped, privately owned Mexcian land grant left in the United States. The pictographs are in an area of the property that’s an hours drive from the nearest paved road. The drawings were originally documented by an archaeologist in 1960, then largely forgotten.

“It’s a site we had heard exists but haven’t had access to for all these years,” said Hedges, who is also an archaeologist. “It’s really exciting to see it.”

Some of the drawings — representing three different styles and Native American cultures — suggest the area may have been used as as a safe haven for Indian tribes trying to escape the European invasion, which began in 1769.

The rancho’s Chief Operating Officer, Hank Rupp, said the pictographs appear to capture a pivotal time in the region’s history.

“I believe what you’re seeing here is a depiction of Native American unhappiness with the Spanish invasion at San Diego,” Rupp said. “The Spanish Conquistadors soldiers came with their church and attempted to foist it on the Native Americans in the area... The Native Americans distaste for that.”

A report prepared by Freers and Hedges says speculation that the figure could be a Spanish soldier is “plausible.”

They said the drawings could be analogous to Kumeyaay paintings in Baja California determined to have been painted around the same time the Conquistadors would have been around.

“The hand implement could be a sword raised in dramatic display,” they write in the report, and note that the body started out as a stick figure but was broadened in the torso area, possibly to give the impression of armor.

Both men have strongly recommend that further studies be done on the drawings to verify their origin. If the pictographs had been found on public land — a state park for instance — state archaeologists would take control, but because the ranch is privately owned further study would have to be done at the owner’s request.

Rupp said more studies are planned, in consultation with experts and local Native American tribes.

“We are cataloging numerous archaeological sites on the ranch for the purpose of knowing where they are, determining what, if anything, needs to be done to preserve them, and to communicate with our Native American partners,” Rupp said.

He said Rancho Guejito — which roughly sits between state routes 76 and 78 in Valley Center — works hard to keep out trespassers and others who might damage culturally significant areas on the sprawling property.

“We patrol the ranch with armed guards,” Rupp said. “if you destroy our Indian artifacts or vandalize them there are two ways out of here: handcuffs or stretcher. We know the law. We are going to do everything we can to protect Native American and California history.”

The sprawling property has changed little over the past few centuries, since Spain’s King Charles III directed Gaspar de Portola in 1769 into what is now present-day California. Accompanied by a group of Franciscans led by Junipero Serra, the plan was to establish a string of missions along the coast from San Diego to Monterey Bay.

One of the prime reasons for creating the mission system was to convert the region’s indigenous population to Christianity. Anywhere from 133,000 to more than 700,000 Native Americans — representing more than 100 tribes — were contacted by the Spanish over the next 50 years, according to historical records.

Rupp said de Portola’s march up the coast, from 1769 to 1770, would have taken place about eight miles west of where the drawings were found on Rancho Guejito.

The next step in documenting and studying the pictographs will be carbon dating, to determine when the art was created, Rupp said. If a bonding agent was used to make the iron oxide-based red paint, even a tiny sample should provide a good estimate.

Freers and Hedges have also recommended that experts assess the area and search for signs of a village.

“Usually villages are associated with rock art within a quarter mile,” Freers said. “This is too remarkable to be just a stop on a trail.”

They also said that other nearby boulders should be closely examined. Large rocks are prolific in the area and many of them may not have been seen by man in decades.

New digital imagining technologies have made it feasible to render pictograph rock art that may have been previously overlooked.

Honoring a defining moment



By **J. Harry Jones**

JUNE 23, 2016, 4:30 PM | RANCHO GUEJITO

Near a Valley Center meadow, deep within a huge swath of undeveloped land known as Rancho Guejito, a stone monument was dedicated Thursday and blessed by a retired Navy chaplain.

The monument — erected just a few feet from the faded wreckage of a Navy jet fighter — honors all members of the armed services, especially the young ensign who safely ejected from the fighter 59 years ago.

It was Nov. 5, 1957, when 22-year-old Navy pilot Robert Jones was testing a new FJ-4B Fury jet his squadron had recently been issued. While flying over Palm Springs, the engine overheated.

Jones glided the jet back toward what was then Naval Air Station Miramar, but was forced to bail out as westerly winds slowed the plane and caused it to lose altitude. The unmanned jet flew on and out of sight.

A few years ago, cowhands at Rancho Guejito — the privately owned 36-square-mile ranch west of Escondido — came upon the wreckage in the rugged, mountainous northern reaches of the property called Chimney Flats.

Several fires had thinned out the brush in the area, exposing the weathered, rusted, and mostly intact fuselage of the fighter.

In 2014, Hank Rupp, the chief operations officer and general counsel for the ranch, was entertaining a guest who was a former aviation accident investigator for the Israeli army. Together they rode horses to the wreckage and the guest immediately recognized the Fury as a military jet.

Research followed, the Navy and Marine Corps were notified, and last year Jones was reunited with the plane.

“It was very touching for him to be reunited with the aircraft,” Rupp said. “He told us later on it was one of the most monumental days of his life. I thought monumental, hmm. I thought we should do more than just that temporary visit and put a monument here. It’s a great story.”

Jones, now 80 and a resident of the state of Washington, could not attend the ceremony because his wife is very ill. A few days after the 1957 incident he was back flying for the Navy, and later went on to have a 30-year-career as a commercial airline pilot. He still flies private aircraft today.

Attached to the the 5-foot by 3-foot stone monument is a plaque that briefly tells Jones' story about safely ejecting at 12,000 feet while over Lake Henshaw and then watching the unmanned jet fly off into the clouds.

"Fifty seven years later, on Feb. 5, 2015, Jones, 79, his wife Sylvia and son Kris visited the scene and was presented the jet's tail hook by Rancho Guejito," the plaque read. "This monument was dedicated in June 2016 to honor all those men and women who serve in the United States armed forces."

Pastor David Plank blessed the shrine, said a few words about the courage of Jones and all who have served, and then along with about a dozen guests enjoyed a nice lunch beneath a huge oak tree.

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